

Twenty Years After August 1963

Great was the throng that was gathered that day,
Great were the leaders who spoke;
High were the goals that were set for the land,
High were the hopes that awoke.

Freedom for everyone lay in the dream,
Freedom from fear and despair,
Freedom to live and to love and to move,
Such aspirations were there.

Fair opportunity, one of the goals,
Schooling and working and rest,
Brotherhood, dignity, justice for all,
Making America best.

Many have died on the way to the dream--
Tell what the living have done!
Have they dealt fairly with all human kind,
Greatest to tiniest one?

What have you done to bring children good health,
Nourished and free from disease?
Bettered their housing and cleaned up their streets,
Earth, air, and water to please?

What have you done to hold learning aloft,
Prized by the young and the old?
From fundamentals to highest of skills,
Learning is dearer than gold.

What have you done to provide work for all?
Trained workers of every hue?
Opened up unions to give them their chance?
Changed the employer's ways, too?

What have you done to make peace on the earth,
Making all arms obsolete?
Peace in your family, neighborhood, town,
Spreading worldwide and complete.

Have you unflinchingly gone out to vote,
As others faced death to assure?
How do you follow up leaders you choose
So good faith and good works endure?

If you neglect any part of this list,
Marching will all be in vain,
Live and take action on what you believe,
That dreams become real, solid, plain

From every mountain, field, and tree
Make America the best she can be!

E. Alma Flagg
1983